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Letters from the People

No More Dirty Tricks

All those who are concerned to see that we continue to have a truly responsible federal government must be deeply grateful for the series of New York Times articles on the Central Intelligence Agency that you published.

A good deal has been said about the need for a further tightening of the controls over the CIA. What more could be done in the executive branch along this line is by no means clear. In Congress, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is quite naturally concerned, because it does not now participate in supervising the CIA. One can sympathize with Senator McCarthy's proposal to provide such participation, but I seriously question how much participation by the Foreign Relations Committee could accomplish. The proposal misses the basic problem.

The authors of the series of articles on the CIA stated that problem in these words: "Is the government of a proud and honorable people relying too much on 'black' operations, 'dirty tricks,' harsh and illicit acts in the 'back alleys' of the world?" After the Bay of Pigs fiasco President Kennedy apparently considered whether the CIA's functions should not be confined to intelligence, and was persuaded that in the interests of efficiency the intelligence function and "black" operations should continue to be combined.

If secret "black" operations and "dirty tricks" are necessary in the in-



terests of our national security, there is much to be said for this view. We are a powerful enough nation not to need them. Actually they do more harm than good.

I think the Congress should give the CIA a clear, unambiguous statutory directive—the present statutory directive is vague. I think the Congress should confine the CIA's functions to intelligence, should direct that henceforth the CIA shall not engage in "black" operations.

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